

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed July 12, 2006, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in response thereto. Claims 7-15 remain pending in the application.

The rejection of claims 7-15 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Applicant expresses appreciation for the helpful comments given in the Office Action. The possible indefiniteness of "loosely" has been removed and amendments have been made to more positively recite the structure of the invention to distinguish over the cited references. Specifically, claims 1 and 15 now recite that the second surface feature is disengaged from the guide rails and the first surface feature when away from the closed position whereby the sliding panel is displaceable away from the fixed panel when positioned between the fully-opened and closed positions.

The rejection of claims 7-15 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Gillen et al is respectfully traversed.

Gillen teaches a lip 96 on gasket 28 for engaging the sliding window without being compressed directly between the fixed panel and the sliding panel. Instead, a slanted lip 96 projects away from the side of the fixed window into the opening where it contacts the sliding window. Since gasket 28 is not compressed directly between the fixed panel and the sliding panel, claims 7-15 are not anticipated.

In Gillen, a spring arm 66 always engages one side of the channel, so that guide 60 is always urged against the other side of the channel (i.e., not just when the window is closed). It appears that spring arm 66 would be necessary in Gillen to avoid drag and wear of the gasket lip during opening and closing of the sliding window. However, the rubbing of spring arm 66 and guide 60 against both sides of the channel would also create friction that opposes easy movement. Claims 7 and 15 recite that the sliding panel is displaceable away from the fixed panel when positioned between the fully-opened and closed positions. Thus, the claimed invention achieves improved operation (i.e., less sliding resistance)

when sliding between open and closed positions while also providing good sealing characteristics when closed. Since Gillen fails to teach this aspect of the claimed invention, there is no anticipation and claims 7-15 are allowable over Gillen.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, claims 7-15 are now in condition for allowance. Favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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